



U.S. Department of the Treasury

Plain Writing Act Compliance Report

2014

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Plain Writing Act Compliance Report 2014

1. Senior Agency Official for Plain Writing:

a. Senior Agency Official responsible for Plain Writing

David G. Clunie (Executive Secretary)

b. Alternate Senior Agency Official responsible for Plain Writing

David R. Pearl (Deputy Executive Secretary)

2. Explain what specific types of agency communications you have released by making them available in a format that is consistent with the Plain Writing guidelines.

Treasury releases a variety of communications to the public that adhere to the principals of Plain Writing. Examples of these communications are discussed in greater depth below. In addition, while Treasury recognizes that the Plain Writing Act does not cover internal writing, we have nonetheless adopted Plain Writing principles for all Treasury writings, particularly those for the Secretary and Deputy Secretary.

Examples of Treasury communications:

- **Financial Report of the United States – A Citizen’s Guide** *available at* <http://fms.treas.gov/fr/13frusg/Citizens-Guide-2013.pdf>. The Citizen’s Guide to the Financial Report of the United States Government is available to the general public and summarizes the current financial position of the U.S. government. The Citizen’s Guide uses Plain Writing principles to make accessible to ordinary citizens the financial condition of their government. The following is an excerpt:


The Financial Report of the United States Government focuses on the Government’s revenues and costs (what came in and what went out), assets and liabilities (what it owns and owes), and other important financial information. The Financial Report compares the Government’s revenues (what the Government has collected and expects to collect, but has not necessarily received), with its costs (what the Government has incurred, but has not necessarily paid) to derive net operating cost.

- **“Treasury For . . .” website** *available at* <http://www.treasury.gov/Pages/treasury-for-text-view.aspx>. The “Treasury For” page provides an accessible way for readers to navigate the Treasury website. The “Treasury For” page has sections for the general public; students and teachers; Spanish-speakers; general businesses; small businesses; international businesses; financial institutions; other federal agencies; state, local and tribal councils; and international governments. Each of these sections has an “I want to” portion that directs the reader to other parts of the Treasury website to gain further information or take action. In addition, each section also features “Common Questions” that provide answers to some of the frequently-asked questions from each group.

Treasury For...

The Public

General Public



Treasury promotes economic growth through policies to support job creation, investment, and economic stability. Treasury also oversees the production of coins and currency, the disbursement of payments to the public, revenue collection, and the funds to run the federal government.

I want to...

[view auctions.](#)

[find a form.](#)

[get tax information at IRS.gov.](#)

[see interest rate data.](#)

[switch to electronic benefits.](#)

[find currency and coin information.](#)

[report a suspicious email or suspected fraud](#)

[view Budget and Performance reports.](#)

[have a lost or expired check reissued](#)

Common Questions

[How do I buy and manage Savings Bonds and Securities?](#)

[Where is my tax refund?](#)

[Direct Express® card - How do I enroll?](#)

[Is my state part of the Hardest Hit Fund housing program and where can I find more info?](#)

[What countries have sanctions?](#)

[Where is the General Explanations of the Administration's Revenue Proposals \(Green Book\)](#)

[How can I find out if the government has unclaimed money or property belonging to me?](#)

- **Ready.Save.Grow materials** available at

<http://www.treasurydirect.gov/readysavegrow/readysavegrow.htm>.

Ready.save.grow is a Treasury initiative to encourage the public to save for retirement. **Ready.save.grow** has a dedicated website that answers frequently-asked questions and provides direct links to purchase savings bonds and other Treasury securities. In addition, since the President announced the My Retirement Account (MyRA) initiative in his State of the Union address this year, Treasury has released a variety of materials to explain the program to the public and provide useful resources. These materials make use of simple language and graphics to explain the purpose of the accounts and how they work.

myRASM My Retirement Account

The U.S. Department of the Treasury will offer a retirement savings account that provides Americans with a simple, safe and affordable way to save for their future.

• What will it be?



myRA will have no fees, will never go down in value and will offer a low opening amount – \$25 or more. Savers will be able to add \$5 or more to the account every payday.



Expected to begin rolling out in **late 2014**.

• Who will it be for?



American workers who want to start saving for retirement.



Employers who want to make a retirement savings program available to their employees with a simple, one-time setup.

• Key Features



SIMPLE

- Deposits are automatic every payday
- Portable – not tied to a single employer
- Contributions can be withdrawn tax free
- Earnings can be withdrawn tax free after five years and the saver is 59 ½



SAFE

- Will never go down in value
- Low-risk
- Backed by the U.S. Treasury
- Information is private and secure



AFFORDABLE

- As little as \$25 to open an account
- Contribute \$5 or more every payday
- No fees
- Roth IRA tax advantages



FOLLOWS ROTH IRA RULES

- Annual income limits - \$129,000 for individuals and \$191,000 for couples*
- Earnings will be tax free if withdrawn after the account is five years old and the saver is 59 ½
- After 30 years or \$15K in savings, saver transfers balance to a private-sector retirement account

*Income limits may change from year to year for cost-of-living adjustments.

For more information, visit
www.treasurydirect.gov/readysavegrow

Ready.Save.Grow. is a service mark of the U.S. Department of the Treasury.




ready.save.grow.

- **Treasury Blog Posts** *available at*

<http://www.treasury.gov/connect/blog/Pages/default.aspx>. Treasury's official blog contains regular entries from senior officials and staff. These blog entries are written in a clear and concise manner to keep the public abreast of recent Treasury developments and policies. They often include useful links to press releases, reports, or related frequently-asked questions for members of the public who want additional information.

Treasury Notes



Home » Connect with Us » Treasury Notes Blog » Online Resources on the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act

Online Resources on the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act

By: Erin Donar 7/2/2014

Yesterday, the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) went into effect with broad international support. FATCA was enacted in 2010 by Congress with bipartisan support to target noncompliance by U.S. citizens of tax obligations using foreign accounts. To date, the U.S. has FATCA agreements treated as in effect with [nearly 100 jurisdictions](#) and more than [80,000 financial institutions](#) have registered with the IRS to comply. Below is a list of online resources to help individuals, financial institutions and others understand FATCA and how they may be affected.

[FATCA FAQs](#)

[Myth vs FATCA](#)

[Information for individuals](#)

[Information for U.S. financial institutions](#)

[Information for foreign financial institutions](#)

[Information for foreign governments](#)

Further information on FATCA can be found at the Treasury Department's [FATCA page here](#).

View the list of foreign financial institutions that have registered with the IRS to comply with [FATCA here](#).

3. Inform agency staff of Plain Writing Act's requirements:

- a. We have posted notices regarding the Plain Writing Act on display monitors throughout the main Treasury building.
- b. The Executive Secretary published an entry regarding Plain Writing compliance on the Treasury intranet's senior official blog. The text of this blog entry was also distributed via email to a Treasury-wide listserv.

4. Training

The Office of the Executive Secretary sends a weekly grammar and style email to Treasury staff entitled "Tip of the Week." The Tip of the Week addresses various topics, ranging from proper comma usage to simplifying complex sentences. In addition, the Office of the Executive Secretary's intranet page includes grammar and style guidelines. In particular, we maintain and regularly update a Treasury Style Manual that reflects Plain Writing principles.

We recently began working with one of the largest Treasury policy offices on a writing workshop that will incorporate Plain Writing principles. In the future, we hope to roll this workshop out to other Treasury policy offices and bureaus.

Finally, we provide Plain Writing materials to all new Treasury employees during their onboarding orientation.

5. Ongoing compliance and sustaining change

- a. Agency contact for compliance issues: David G. Clunie, Executive Secretary
- b. Alternate agency contact for compliance issues: David R. Pearl, Deputy Executive Secretary
- c. The Office of the Executive Secretary is responsible for documenting and reporting the use of Plain Writing in agency communications and for compiling annual compliance reports.
- d. Clearance process: The Office of the Executive Secretary is the final clearer of all writing for the Secretary, Federal Register documents, and congressional correspondence and is involved in the clearance of many public-facing documents, including press releases, blog posts, and op-eds. Executive Secretary review includes evaluating compliance with the Plain Writing Act, conducting quality control for substantive accuracy and technical integrity, and promoting policy coordination.

6. Agency's Plain Writing website

- a. Website address: <http://www.treasury.gov/open/Pages/plainwriting.aspx>.
A link to this website can be found on the main Treasury.gov website.
- b. Contact us: PlainWriting@treasury.gov
- c. Our website includes links to this and all previous compliance reports and links to OMB and PLAIN.

7. Customer Satisfaction Evaluation after Experiencing Plain Writing Communications

Treasury's Plain Writing website requests visitors inform us if they have trouble understanding Treasury documents or the pages on Treasury's website by emailing PlainWriting@treasury.gov with a link to the document or page they are referencing.

Beyond monitoring the feedback we receive at the above Plain Writing inbox, we are currently evaluating the most effective metrics for gauging our Plain Writing progress over time and look forward to reporting on our progress in our next compliance report.



Department Office Coordinators

Assistant Secretary for Management
Domestic Finance
Economic Policy
General Council
International Affairs
Legislative Affairs
Office of Tax Policy
Public Affairs
Terrorism and Financial Intelligence
Treasurer

Beth Milbank
Lepi Jha
Gauri Subramani
Daniel Paisley
Elizabeth Shortino
Patrick Maloney
Stacey Rolland
Stephanie Ma
Kevin O'Connor
Kristin Thompson

Bureau Coordinators

Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade (TTB)
Bureau of Engraving and Printing
Community Development Financial Institutions
Fiscal Services
Internal Revenue Service (IRS)
Mint
Office of Inspector General

Elisabeth Kann
Lisa Lynam
Brette Fishman
Stacy Neal
Terry Lemons
Eric Anderson
Tricia Hollis